Satan’s main headquarters in Hell is an enormous complex featuring his favorite artifacts and memorabilia from throughout human history.

There are rooms stocked with the most ingenious torture devices ever devised by demonically inspired human beings; long hallways lined with thousands of photographs of both notorious and obscure mass murderers, perverts, racists, con artists, capitalist pigs, tyrants, anarchists, terrorists, arch-heretics and pathological liars (including many politicians and a surprising number of clerics and theologians); red-lit rooms that proudly display the most extensive collection of pornography in the universe; a spacious, convention-sized room modeled after Dave & Buster’s loaded with hundreds of the most mindless and violent video games Satan ever inspired; and room after room featuring rows upon rows of DVDs with titles such as “Satan’s Hollywood Favorites, Volume 81: ‘Guy’ Movies” and “Satan’s Hollywood Favorites, Volume 382: TV Sit-Coms, 1978-81,” along with thousands of compact discs with titles such as “Satan’s Greatest Hits, Vol. 86: From Ludacris to Madonna.”

But the vortex of this complex of decadence, and the energy center that has generated most of Satan’s proudest accomplishments, is his library – a vast collection of volumes on virtually every conceivable topic, including thousands of books on science, philosophy, psychology, theology, and even biblical studies. His very favorites, though, which he proudly displays in a special bookshelf in the center of the room, is an elite collection of books that have most effectively promoted his agenda (either subtly or explicitly) and corrupted everything that God originally intended for good.

In his book, *Ten Books That Screwed Up the World* (Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2008), Benjamin Wiker writes that “Ideas have consequences,” and they oftentimes “float, largely undetected, in the intellectual air we breathe” until they reach a critical mass. As the philosopher Hegel taught, some of the Great Ideas in human history have been liberating – Christianity, representative self-government, and economic freedom, for example. Other ideas are toxic and cancerous, and they eat away at a culture’s moral base. Some of the worst ideas are subtle and seductive, while others are blatantly obvious.

Like a viral epidemic, many of the most insidious and destructive ideas ever generated in Hell have been propagated through some of the most popular and influential books of the past few centuries. There are many examples of such ideas, and the 30 books listed below are filled with them. As the Roman statesman Cicero once observed, “There is nothing so absurd that it hasn’t been said by a philosopher” – or by an anthropologist, an historian or a theologian, for that matter.

Interestingly, many of the authors in this elite list of bad books share at least some of the following traits in common:

1. Many were atheists (either avowedly or functionally) who operated out of a naturalistic worldview. Having rejected God, they had a distorted view of reality in general and human nature in particular.

2. Most were moral relativists – although, ironically, many were exceedingly moralistic and quite certain that their own moral perspective was
absolutely true.

(3) Many were utopian idealists. They were often astute social critics who recognized that the world is screwed up, and many were social engineers who sought to transform humanity (and human nature) by radically transforming the social, political and economic systems. However, having rejected God and a biblically based worldview, they neither understood why the world is so dysfunctional nor how to change it for the better. Therefore, they manufactured myths disconnected from reality to explain why the world is so fouled up and how to fix it, but their analyses and solutions only made things worse.

(4) Many, especially in the 20th century, were sexual revolutionaries. Believing that human beings are merely highly evolved animals, they easily (and eagerly) embraced and promoted a naturalistic view of sexuality disconnected from traditional Biblically based morality.

The Cumulative Effect

The 20th century witnessed the convergence of these themes, and the cumulative effect has been substantial and devastating. Rather than ushering in an Age of Aquarius, these ideas produced the most chaotic and horrific century in human history. In fact, the intellectual and moral foundations of Western culture had been eroding for hundreds of years, but prior to the French Revolution and the advent of modern atheistic regimes many blamed Christianity for the problems in Western civilization. But as Benjamin Wiker observes, “after the 20th century, when much of the world lay convulsed and broken upon the rock-hard certainties of so many secular political utopian schemes, atheism no longer has the luxury of speculating upon how grand the future will be once we’ve rid the world of [all religious influences] and brought heaven to earth.” Similarly, the Russian philosopher Semyon Frank astutely summarizes the mentality of the secular idealists who have wreaked so much havoc on humanity in the past century:

Sacrificing himself for the sake of an idea, he does not hesitate to sacrifice others for it. Among his contemporaries he sees either the victims of the world’s evil he dreams of eradicating or the perpetrators of that evil.... This feeling of hatred for the enemies of the people forms the psychological foundation of his life. Thus the great love of mankind and of the future gives birth to a great hatred for people; [and] the passion for organizing an earthly paradise becomes a passion for destruction. [Sacred Causes. Quoted in Wiker, p. 227.]

The hatred that Frank mentions was particularly intense when directed at Christians and cultural conservatives who stood in the way of these secular idealists and their utopian New World Order. In the 20th century, Marxist utopians alone were responsible for the extermination of an estimated 100 million “enemies of the people” – all on behalf of “the people,” of course.

Why Should Christians Know These Books?

Christians are called to be the “light” and “salt” in society. This makes it imperative that we understand our times – including those ideas that compete with the Christian faith in the public square. But Christians are losing the war of ideas in America – and often by default primarily because we have forfeited the great intellectual battles of our time. The extent of ignorance, laziness and apathy among Christians (and Christian leaders) is nothing short of disgraceful.

We may not be able to turn back the secular tsunami that threatens to engulf our society and culture in a tidal wave of immorality and corruption, but we have a spiritual responsibility before God to do what we can. But we cannot be a source of light and truth until we understand what’s going on and why our culture has become so dysfunctional and hostile toward Christian values and beliefs. The solution to bad ideas that are plaguing our culture is not to ignore them, just as the solution to bad books is not necessarily to discourage Christians from knowing about them. On the contrary, rather than avoid insidious and destructive ideas and influences, we need to encounter them, understand them, and be equipped to defeat them.

The following is a select list of 30 influential and significant books over the past 500 years that have distorted reality, corrupted morality and undermined civility. These are books that informed Christians, whether they have read some or most of these books or not, should know.
SATAN’S BOOKSHELF

The Worst Books Ever Written...
And Why Christians Should Know Them

The Top 30
(Listed generally in chronological order)

4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)
5. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins... of Inequality Among Men* (1755)
6. Joseph Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (c. 1827)
8. Ernest Renan, *Origins of the History of Christianity* (1864) and *The Life of Jesus* (1867)
12. Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871)
13. Friedrich Neitzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)
17. Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928)
19. Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (1934)

Dishonorable Mention

Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (1637)
Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794)
David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835)
Thomas Huxley, *Evidence as to Man’s Place in Nature* (1863)
Sergei Nilus, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1905)
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)

NOTES